

Effective Itinerant Services
**for Students who are Deaf
or Hard of Hearing**

March 12, 2009
Professional Conference

What we know...

Language is the cornerstone of life.

It is the foundation for learning. Everyone has the innate need and ability for language. Research shows that language is learned through natural interaction; through listening and language exchange. The opportunity for children to directly communicate with family, friends, peers, and other adults is what shapes the brain structures for learning and exploring through language. To understand and be understood is a basic need.

What about dhh children?

- **Children who are deaf** have limited access to spoken language. Technology helps but does not 'fix'. Technology does not have the same outcome for each deaf child.
- **Children who are hard of hearing** benefit from listening technology. However, technology does not 'fix' their hearing to the level of typical hearing. Good speech is NOT *an indicator of a child's ability to understand* what is said in all situations.

Language & Communication Needs ...

... are at the heart of educational focus for dhh students impacting:

- Incidental Learning
- Rules of social interaction
- Academic language different from social language

Why are we looking at itinerant services?

- ***Input from teachers, directors, parents and the national professional community*** on ways to best meet the needs of this low incidence population.
- The **National Agenda** for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Statewide requirements to address the educational service needs of all students with disabilities to ***improve outcomes.***

State Report Card

- **Indicator 1** – *effective* learning practices that support students in school leading to **graduation.**
- **Indicators 3c** – identify *effective* educational services that support students in meeting proficiency on **statewide assessments**
- **Indicator 5** – identify the *effectiveness* of child learning and success in each of the **educational environments;**

State Report Card

- **Indicators 6** – Identify the *effectiveness* of the varied **preschool options** for young children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Indicator 7** – Identify **outcomes** relevant to;
 - a) positive **social-emotional** skills,
 - b) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills in **language and communication** including early **literacy**,
 - c) use of **appropriate behaviors** to meet their needs.

State Report Card

- **Indicator 8** – Identify *effective* **parent involvement** as a means of improving services and results for their child.
- **Indicator 13** – identify *effective* supports that include transition services designed to support the needs of dhh youth in preparing for **post-secondary goals**.
- **Indicator 14** - identify the deaf and hard of hearing young adults successful in a **postsecondary program or employed or both**.

Why should we care about the educational continuum?

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing have long benefited from the **various educational options** along the continuum of educational services.

- Neighborhood school program
- Regional program
- State program

How does "critical mass" support educational needs?

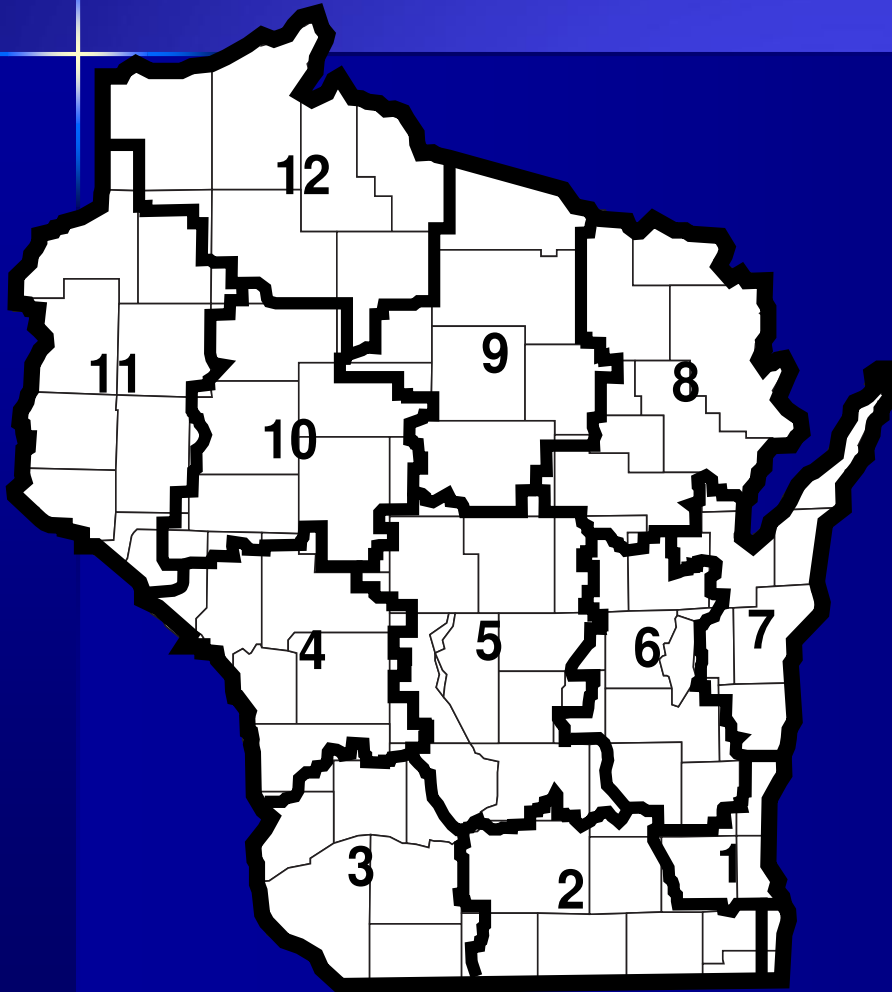
- Students can communicate directly with other dhh students who share their life experience.
- Language learning, exchange, and exploration occurs naturally with peers.
- Learning strategies may be shared (avoids the *"I'm the only one who can't..."*)

How does "critical mass" support social-emotional needs?

People seek to be with like peers. When with others similar to ourselves, we **do not need to 'explain'** *who we are, our different needs, or what we do, etc.*

Self acceptance increases when with like peers. Emotional and social well-being is enhanced when we are "*not the only one*".

DHH Students in CESA Regions



CESA	students
1	642
2	406
3	66
4	73
5	112
6	203
7	330
8	78
9	67
10	77
11	126
12	52

Activities addressing Itinerant Services:

- WIN round table discussion (2004)
- Teacher survey of student profile (4 years of data; 2001-2005)
- Survey of teachers on itinerant services (2005-06)
- Focus Groups (spring 2008)
- Workgroup (spring 2009)

WIN input (2004)

What do you like most about your role as an itinerant teacher?

- Work with students of all grade levels
- Follow students throughout their education
- Work with many professionals
- Able to plan and process activities while driving
- Knowing the range of resources in different districts
- Not a part of 'school politics'

WIN input (2004)

1. *Barriers to meeting student needs / possible solutions...*

- Hard to work around student schedules
- Balancing student need with the amount of time available to provide needed services

- Increase number of qualified dhh teachers
- Allow for creative scheduling
- Strategic planning each spring to determine student need along with teacher time.

WIN input (2004)

2. *Barriers to meeting student needs / possible solutions...*

- Administrative planning based on \$\$ not student need
- Too many 'bosses'

- Administrators understand and support the varied needs of dhh students
- Honest communication about what the dhh teacher can and cannot provide to support student need

WIN input (2004)

3. *Barriers to meeting student needs / possible solutions...*

- Collaboration time with dhh staff and regular education staff
- Lack of camaraderie / connection to each school community due to multiple schools

- Schedule in 'collaboration time'
- Share responsibilities / team work
- Be included on the email list for each school
- Schedule lunch at different schools

Survey says ...

(Student profile)

% students - HH	69%
% students – Deaf	31%
% students with consult only	20%
% students with additional disabilities	37%
% dhh teachers reporting working as itinerant teachers	45%

Survey says

(Itinerant services)

10 + hours/ week	6-10 hours/ week	2-5 hours/ week	Less than 2 hours / week
4%	7%	25%	64%

Survey Says (data)

(itinerant services)

■ CESA 1

■ CESA 2

■ CESA 3

■ CESA 4

# districts	# schools	# miles/ week
6	37	10 - 100
18	49	12-322
Not enough information available.		
8	15	750

Survey Says (data)

■ CESA 5

■ CESA 6

■ CESA 7

■ CESA 8

# districts	# schools	# miles/ week
6	9	80-800
21		
14	57	20-500
26	69	225-500

Survey Says (data)

- CESA 9
- CESA 10
- CESA 11
- CESA 12

# districts	# schools	# miles/ week
3	16	20-45
13	19	60-475
35	61	100 - 850
9	12	325

Leading Questions ...

Based on what we know about the educational needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing...

- What are *effective supports* for healthy learning environments?
- How *effectively* does 2 or fewer hours of support / week meet student needs?
- Is the travel distance and time of itinerant teachers an *efficient use of time and \$\$*?
- What is the *cost of service* compared to the cost on the child's educational gain?

The 4 Focus Groups:

April 4 at CESA 4

CESA areas **2, 3, 4 & 5**

April 17 at Green Bay

CESA areas **6, 7, 8**

April 25 at CESA 1

SE Wis including Walworth Cty

May 19 in Rice Lake

CESA areas **9, 10, 11 & 12**

The 4 Focus Groups:

Focus Group Participants

- Special education directors
- DHH teachers
- General education teachers

Activities of the Focus Groups:

To take a close look at itinerant teaching services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing from multiple perspectives in order to;

- *Identify **benefits** of itinerant services*
- *identify **challenges** to the effectiveness of itinerant services, and*
- *Identify **qualities needed** for effective itinerant services.*

What are the *benefits* of itinerant teaching services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Survey Says **Benefits**

- Student is in their home school.
- Students in rural areas get support through itinerant services.
- Students build peer relationships in their community.

Common Themes – ***BENEFITS***

- Students in rural areas get service when in the past they may be ignored.
- Emphasis is on services to students vs sending students to services.
- General educators are supported in creating an optimal listening environment that can benefit all

Common Themes – ***BENEFITS***

- Child attends local school with siblings
- Knows neighborhood kids
- More likely to participate in extra-curricular programs
- Learns the same curriculum as their peers
- Practice self-advocacy with hearing peers

Common Themes – ***BENEFITS***

- DHH Teacher learns from other general education teachers
- May participate in general education professional development
- Less expensive for districts to hire itinerant teacher

What are the ***challenges***
of providing itinerant
services for deaf and
hard of hearing students?

Survey Says **Challenges**

- Scheduling that meets the student's needs.
- Lack of continuity in educational program support.
- Limited time to provide language and literacy support.
- Students are often isolated.
- Inconsistent use of technology.
- School staff may not always accommodate or follow through on suggested student supports.

Common Themes

CHALLENGES

- Technology needs may not be immediately resolved.
- Teachers inconsistently use listening technology
- Lack of understanding in the regular education environment and the larger learning community, including extra-curricular activities.

Common Themes

CHALLENGES

- Too much time on the road instead of with the students
- Districts may 'forget about' the dhh teacher and not include her on the IEP team
- IEP teams may determine that a child meets dhh criteria without including or informing a dhh teacher.

Common Themes

CHALLENGES

- Caseloads are large
- Do not feel a part of a school community
- Each district has different software that does not allow the itinerant teacher to access the system / work from another location.

Common Themes

CHALLENGES

- Work space is inconsistent, non-existent, in a poor acoustic setting, etc.
- Scheduling around student needs is challenging with shifting needs
- Limited to no prep time for multiple grades in multiple districts with varied curriculum.

Common Themes

CHALLENGES

- Difficult to keep up with many technology needs
- Difficult to supervise interpreters
- Hard to find dhh teachers willing to provide itinerant services

Common Themes

CHALLENGES

- Students may feel isolated impacting:
 - self-awareness
 - Self identity
 - Language development
 - Social-emotional development

If we, as a group of collaborative partners, were to describe the ***best possible design*** for itinerant services, what might that look like?

Common Themes

BEST POSSIBLE DESIGN

- When is it better to **move the student to services** vs *services to the student*?
- What is most important to the student's success?
- What role does the DHH teacher play in the planning and implementation of an ***effective*** educational plan?

Common Themes

BEST POSSIBLE DESIGN

Quality supports are needed:

- For students
- For dhh teachers
- For educational interpreters
- For parents

We need a description of student skills needed in order to benefit from the limits of the itinerant services.

***IF* the role of the teacher is ...**

- To foster a personal connection between the student and learning through which the teacher positively acknowledges the students knowledge and readiness to learn, and then cultivates curiosity of the subject while facilitating the learning process.

How might the itinerant teacher support this?

***IF* the role of the teacher is ...**

- To dedicate themselves to working collaboratively with colleagues....
- To facilitate student learning and provide relationship development opportunities.....

How might the itinerant teacher support this?

***IF* the role of the teacher is ...**

- To facilitate an environment where learning takes place in the general education setting where all participants have an equal voice.....
- To provide an overall framework, create a culture, develop a relationship, and create enthusiasm that will enhance student learning.

How might the itinerant teacher support this?

Membership

"I belong. I have meaningful friendships here."

"I can ask questions and I learn here."

Participation

Regular class

School routine

Learning

Academic skills

Social skills

How might the dhh student be a meaningful member of their classroom?

Next:

The Workgroup

Invited Participants all attended a Focus Group:

- Special Education Directors (large district and CESA based)
- DHH Teachers (large district and CESA based)
- General education Teachers
- Parents

**What do YOU want
us to take forward
to the workgroup?**

Planned Activity

- Review the input from Focus Groups
- Review national materials
- Review projects related to the provision of dhh services in rural areas

Goals

Create a set of **guidelines** for district staff and parents to support decisions about:

- Educational services that effectively meet the many **student learning needs**
- Plan to address cost efficiency in program design that **supports student need**
- Supports parent decision-making for **student services** and placement.

Anticipated Timeline

- Spring and summer 2009
 - Meet twice to review materials
 - Draft plan of action for the workgroup
 - Identify pros and cons of ideas shared
 - Begin Guidelines
- 2009-2010
 - Continue with the work on the workgroup action plan
 - Complete the guidelines

***Please contact Ann or Carol
with any of your thoughts
and / or questions***

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Thank you